

Project/Problem Based Learning Example

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Is PBL Just “Too Hard”

“Project-based learning is great but it is too hard for teachers to do well.” I have heard this belief stated more times than I can count. **Is PBL really so difficult that only a select number of masterful teachers, innovative schools, and dynamic school leaders can pull off high quality projects?** I don’t think so.

In the service of inspiring educators to embrace a performance-based approach to teaching, learning and assessment by highlighting great projects, I am worried that we actually dissuade teachers and leaders from using this approach. As learners we need to be presented with challenging yet attainable tasks in order to gain our full engagement. **A bar set too low is boring and a bar set too high is daunting** — why even start on this task if I will fail?

To dramatically increase the number of students and teachers engaging in project-based learning and performance assessment we need to highlight examples that are attainable. **Rather than ask teachers to become master designers of curriculum, we should encourage teachers to tweak, or adapt, their current work to give it a more performance-based flavor.**

Step 1: Entry Document

The entry document is student's first look at a project. Not all the information or tasks might be included, but the Entry Document will introduce the project, expectations, and engage the students' interests.



**ANNOUNCING A NEW FILM
IN THE MAKING BASED ON
THE WORKS OF
EDGAR ALLEN POE.**

ANNOUNCING THE NEWEST NEW LINE CINEMA PRODUCTION:

Whom It May Concern,

I have attached the following news clip and guidelines for writing and creating a treatment for our new film endeavor, *Midnight Dreary... and other Tales of Terror*. Our goal is to capture the same style and mood of Poe's original stories, as well as add in some scenes that are definitely "missing" from the original story plots.

We will be sending some film executives to your office on Wednesday, April 1st. They will critique your work, hear your pitch, and view your film treatments. Some of the executives are interested in animation, so if your team agrees on it, you can create your treatment as an animation rather than a short film.

Requirements:

1. Select a story/poem by Edgar Allan Poe and complete a Plot Analysis of that story/poem.
2. Write a summary of that story/poem.
3. Write an original script for a scene that is missing in that story/poem.
4. Maintain the same mood and style in your script as the originals.
5. Incorporate dialogue, props, music, and scenery for a 3 to 7 minute animation or film.
6. Prepare a presentation for the executives including:
 - a biography of Edgar Allan Poe, complete with bibliography,
 - the summary of the story/poem you chose and a summary of your script, and
 - the final treatment film and/or animation (that include proper credits at the end).
7. All members of your team need to participate in creating the final product, even if they do not speak or act in the treatment. All members of your team need to present a portion to the executives.

To assess understanding, the teacher and students review the document and create a KNOW, NEED TO KNOW document.

MIDNIGHT DREARY... POE PROJECT ENTRY DOCUMENT	
KNOW	NEED TO KNOW

Step 2: The Rubric

The Rubric is possibly the most important piece of the PBL Puzzle. Students get this on Day 1 of the project and it is reviewed throughout the Project Timeline. The Rubric is based on content and 21st Century Skills, including School Wide Learning Outcomes.

Midnight Dreary Film Treatment			
CRITERIA	UNSATISFACTORY (Below Performance Standards)	PROFICIENT (Minimal Criteria)	ADVANCED (Demonstrates Exceptional Performance)
Technology (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student fails to select appropriate software to create media Multi media, (pictures, color, video, sound, music, etc.) is not used and/or not appropriate to the theme and idea Has no clear title or end title information Editing is not smooth and/or includes too much time before or after a cut No editing has taken place Student did not modify sound accordingly: Sound quality is either too quiet and/or too loud <p>0 ----- 8 ----- 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student uses iMovie or Movie Maker software to create a short film/ or uses appropriate program if creating an animation Film/ animation uses a variety of media, (pictures, color, video, sound, music, etc.) that are appropriate to the theme and idea of the project There is displayed a clear opening title scene and appropriate end title information Editing is clear and smooth without jumps or too much time before or after a cut – uses tripod when appropriate Dialogue and background music work well together – actors are easy to hear and understand <p>14 ----- 18 ----- 20</p>	<p>In addition to meeting the PROFICIENT criteria...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses a wide variety of media Project runs smoothly, with no technical difficulties Student uses technology to solve problems or uses technology in a new way Student applies unique and creative elements of technology Effects enhance presentation or product Project is fresh, memorable and inventive Content is in publishable form, free of error <p>21 ----- 23 ----- 25</p>
Critical Thinking (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials (photos, sound files, video clips, apparel, illustrations, etc.) are not appropriate for the audience and the situation. Students did not write a NEW missing scene, but just recreated something Poe already wrote Language used is not appropriate for the audience and situation. Humor doesn't enhance understanding and may offend audience. Student is not able to modify theories, products, ideas, or skills to fit new or changed environment. The mood and style from the original Poe story/poem is not recognizable and/ or does not match the situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student selects materials (photos, sound files, video clips, apparel, illustrations, etc.) that are appropriate for the audience and the situation. It is clear that the scene is a new "missing" scene based off of an original Poe story/poem Student uses language appropriate for the audience and situation. Student uses humor that enhances understanding and doesn't offend audience. Student demonstrates an ability to apply theories, principles, and/or skills to new situations, settings, or problems. The same mood and style from the original Poe story/poem is easily identifiable in the film 	<p>In addition to meeting the PROFICIENT criteria...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student shows deep understanding of both audience and the situation by selecting materials that enhance understanding. Clear and unique "missing" scene expands upon an original Poe story/poem Student selects language to create a strong, positive response from target audience. Student actively seeks new environment and situations to apply theories, principles and/or skills. Student provides multiple examples of how theory, principles, or skill can be applied. Mood and style obviously recognizable from the original Poe story/poem and expands upon the story

Step 3: Group Contract

For Group Projects it is important for students to create their own contracts and outline the expectations for not only themselves, but for each individual member.

SECTION 3: GROUP GOALS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

SECTION 4: INDIVIDUAL TASK LIST Be very specific about what jobs and tasks each student will be responsible for his or her tasks. List which parts each student will head up.

Everyone will be responsible for his or her own individual work, but group members should also provide help to any member in need.

1. Who will check final documents against the Rubric?
2. Who will check to see that all images have citations?
3. Who will check to make sure all research has citations?
4. Who will proofread all work (grammar & spelling)?
5. Who will be in charge of making sure your group is ready for the presentation?
6. Who will be in charge of emailing the teacher and group members all documents?
7. Who will be in charge of checking off completed assignments listed on the Project Pacing Chart?
8. Other responsibilities?



Step 4: Tasks and Mini-Assessments

Of course, though out each major project is a series of mini-lessons, tasks, and assessments.

How to Pitch Your Ideas Successfully

by Lenore Wright

If you fear pitching your stories to agents and producers and panels, you're not alone. Many writers find pitching difficult. If th profession like writing.

Script writing may be a so magical on that blank pag Working writers often pit after they sell the script, learn how to pitch effect

Tips for Dynamic Pitching

- Practice Your Pitch

This seems rudimentary creative process DON'T wing it.

Insider tip: Practice written or a movie with the improvement

STORY BRAINSTORMING SHEET

Use the chart below to brainstorm stories/poems written by Poe that you and want to write your "Missing Scene" for.

Name of the Story/Poem	Have you read this story yet??
	YES or NO

Name:

FILM DEFINITIONS

Define each of the following Film Terms:

Footage
Dubbing
Camera
Insert Shot
Close Up
Syncing
Foley Artist



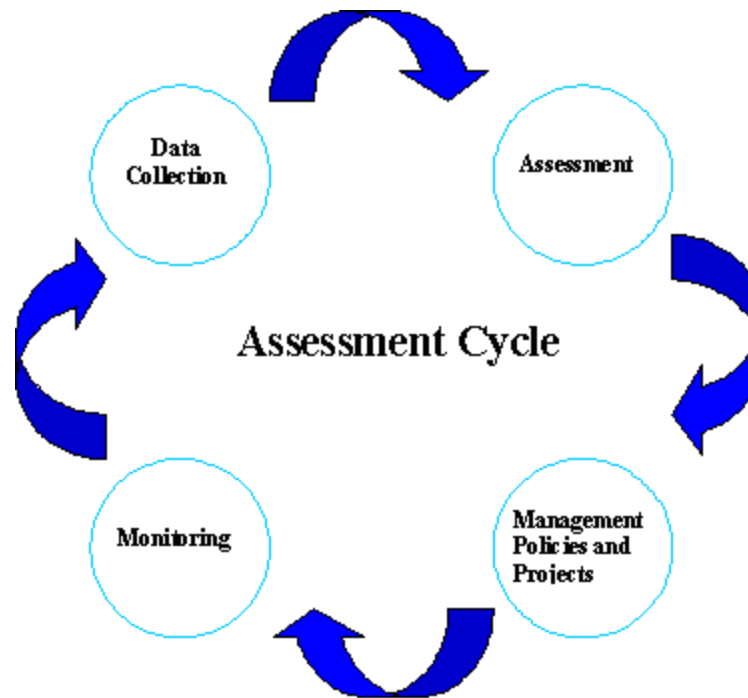
Step 5: Presentation

Presenting a project to not only the class, but to members of the community and experts in the field, adds a motivational level for students. They understand that sharing their work outside of the classroom walls is part of the collaborative process.



Step 6: Assessment

Just as in any assignment, a final assessment to gauge knowledge is used to see how students understand the content based on standards. While the final presentation can be used as an assessment, often individual assessments are given as well.



Step 7: Reflection

Best practices include reflection for both educators and students. What worked, what didn't, how can future projects be even better? This feedback, when compiled, is essential to creating motivating, structured and relevant curriculum.

Write in complete sentence and in paragraph form to answer the following with detail and critical thinking.

1. What skills did you learn in your Communication Studies class while doing this project?
2. What skills did you learn in your Digital Media class while doing this project?
3. How do you think creating the film/animation in your Digital Media Class helped you reinforce the skills you learned in Communication Studies?
4. What did you enjoy most in this project?
5. If you could do this project again, what would YOU do differently?
6. What resources do you think could have used to make this project even better (even ones we don't have at school)?
7. How do you think you can use the skills you have learned in Digital Media in other projects and in other classes?
8. Other Comments:

Example Project



[Summer Project: Building a Boat & More](#)

Maine's First Ship began the Shallop Project connecting community volunteers, fourteen high school students, a science teacher, a shipwright and a media specialist in a two-month summer project. [Time: 6:41]

[Watch the video »](#)



[Explorer Elementary Student Projects](#)

Students of various grades from Explorer Elementary share their work. [Time: 3:45]

[Watch the video »](#)



[The Blood Bank Project: Team Teaching](#)

High Tech High seniors work on multimedia dioramas integrating art, biology, and technology to promote the San Diego Blood Bank. [Time: 4:40]

[Watch the video »](#)

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